

CATS Newsletter

Vol. 11 No. 6
October 1993

The Capital Area
Timex/Sinclair Users Group



CHAIRMAN'S Chats

by Bob Diggs

So, I bit the bullet and volunteered to be Temporary Chairman for the September meeting. I had a selfish reason - I wanted control of the meeting because I was going to talk about how I use my computer and I thought I could have better control of the time by being the one to say "meeting come to order" and "the meeting is adjourned", etc. HI HI!

The last time I had a program for the club, I asked to start before the executive committee met because, to me, those meetings seemed to last forever. And, I never fully understood why and what they did with all that time. We don't have an executive committee any more so that is no longer a problem and it would have been better if I had kept my big mouth shut and let some one else volunteer. !

I found out that there is more to it than running the meeting. The first thing was when George Rey asked me if I "took the book home". What book? The roll book with whatever else may be in it. Why? I don't know but now I think I do but I'll come to that later.

Things went OK. I enjoyed talking about what I do with my QL. Using Taskmaster, I was able to use Quill to show my outline for the presentation, Abacus to show how I track the stock market to get indicators of when to get in or out of the market, Easel to show a graphic display of switch signals and demonstrate Conqueror Gold SE with the Gold card. Don't you think it is impressive to have four programs, three QL plus one Dos available at the touch of two keys? I do and am continually impressed by what our QL's can do. I think it is great to be in the IBM world along with my children and their family and not have to give up my QL and familiar programs.

I demonstrated Quicken4, an awesome Dos financial program and Filers Choice, a Dos data base program more user friendly than Archive.

I also thought it was impressive to not only multitask, but be in the IBM world using a 1.33 Mb Hard Drive. Part of the drive was MS Dos and the rest of the disk was QDOS with Abacus, Easel and Quill files! Believe me when I say things run better on a hard drive than on two floppies. Using a virtual drive, Dos commands, files, or programs can be stored there. Then, using an auto batch file, data from the virtual drive can go back to the source automatically and prevent any loss from using the ram disc.

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And Editor's Raps... Mark Fisher

This issue is being rushed through to fit in with vacation plans of the production crew. If this causes your article to miss publication, I hereby apologize. It's true for Hank Dickson, at least. He rushed to put his contribution in the mail, but several critical bits got left out, and we don't have time... Well, next month!

What will get in the newsletter:

All material submitted to the newsletter will be printed. Period. If no one sends anything in, the newsletter will be VERY short. Material may be submitted via BBS (301-589-7407), IBM disk, QL disk, or hard copy (hard copy will not be re-typed).

It is important for me to have financial records available for my family just in case something should happen to me. All of my children have IBM clones and Quicken so my files can be read by them. I send a floppy each year for their information.

Enough rambling - back to some problems, which I was not aware of until a few days later.

As you can gather, I have never been an officer or a member of the executive committee, but even though I have contributed to the newsletter and talked about packet (digital communication via amateur radio) a couple of times, I had little idea of what kept the club running. I did think it had too much formality and would be better off the way we are doing now and I still think so.

The September newsletter was delivered to those at the meeting. To the best of my knowledge it was not mailed out so no one else knew the program. No big deal, but sometimes members make an effort to be there when the subject is of special interest.

However, the Newsletter is the only way for other members to know what is going on. It is important and I think the history or archives of the club are important too.

Therefore, I have some concern about the recording Secretary being a temporary position.

Publicity and ways to attract new or maintain present membership are not covered in any way either.

I think the temporary Chairman, to fulfill the responsibilities of the office, should follow up until relieved of office at the next meeting by:

1. Make sure the Recording Secretary has prepared the minutes.

a) The constitution says the RS "shall keep a written record of all meetings".

b) Where should the minutes be kept? In the book?

2. Make sure the minutes are put in the proper

place. The Book?

3. Check with the editor about the status of the newsletter and assist if necessary.

4. Check with the Curnutts, who have, quietly and without recognition, been getting the Newsletter mailed and assist if necessary.

5. Check with speaker for the next meeting and help as necessary.

6. Through the month be aware of the Chairman's duties.

In other words - let's not fail for lack of leadership!

Another dumb thing happened. Not one of us at the meeting noticed the Newsletter had the wrong date for the picnic. The picnic was held on the 18th and not the 25th as stated in the Newsletter. We had a good time in spite of the rain and we had more good food than could be eaten. I hope no one comes Saturday because we won't be here. If, however, it had been noticed at the meeting we might have been able to change.

That's enough - we have a good thing going let's keep it good, simple and enjoy!

BBS News:

Mark Fisher

There's a new look on the phone-waves these days! I'm trying an alternate BBS program, on an alternate machine (an IBM 8086 PC). Yes, I know, it's not Kosher, but it IS obsolete, AND free - and mounting a hard disk again will be easier. The system also will handle 2400 BAUD, and a variety of packet methods for file transfers. It is also much more user friendly on the files end, as looking through the files is part of the main menu.

I haven't yet transferred the user files from the old program, so all users will be "new visitors" 'till I do. Try it out, and leave me a message telling me your thoughts!

DIGITAL VS ANALOG

By George Rey

Early as a Sea-Scout and latter as a midshipman I learnt digital -- the morse code. Dit-dah, yea-nay, 0 or 1, precursors to machine code?

In those days of the computer the IBM'ers were pondering as to whether to develop their machines along digital or analog lines. Just recently the far-ahead Japanese lunged toward high resolution TV (HRTV) development via the analog route. A U.S.A. consortium pushing digital imagery claims cheaper and better images with digital technology. As far as I can tell over these forty years the game is over -- digital communication, for whatever purpose, for audio or video, is in, is basic, is fundamental to the decision process of the human brain.

Digital means on-off, yes-no, up-down, good-bad, and so on. These fences zero-in on a target eventually and computer chips are being made to do the zeroing-in at light speed and cheaply as compared to what is going on in the analog camp. The future is digital in language. Your Sinclair unit speaks this language. You, we, have an interpreter - don't sell it short. My forty years wait has ended.

From what I have said previously the laws of economics favor digital solutions, that is chips, for all the varied uses electronic communications will lead us into.

From my life-long observations I would venture that our most complex sense, that of sight communicates to the brain in bits which can define colors, structure, forms, etc. It is thus not surprising that we can transmit video imagery by digital code and in very high resolution at that.

I would like to say I can say I know some about analog systems, but I don't. I am willing to be tutored on this. For now, as in the past I saw the analog communication as one attempting to simulate as closely as possible what it is put to define and transmit.

The new battle in communications and

computing is now what's the best medium to transmit through to interface outside of one's station and that one can afford. For now the wire is ahead, because its already in place and has been paid for. But for new or reworked installations there are two alternatives - as mentioned previously, fiber optic cable and wireless transmissions at revolutionary frequencies and bandwidths used by the latest cellular phone industry.

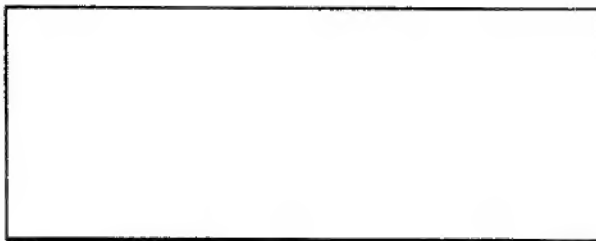
Time will of course tell who will win out in the far future. But for several years to come we can expect a hodgepodge of media with the phone hook-up being fundamental to us to establish a toehold on the info express.

Meanwhile the big boys will be making bids, sales pitches, and proposals to capture as much market share of information consumers they can get. And making many flashy claims that could lead some to go broke in short order.

CATS has its own Marconi -- Bob Diggs, and if he understands and can relate to what I have said so far he should be able to give us insight on the prospects of wireless communication with computer systems. If you remember some years ago he gave a demonstration of interacting his QL with broadcasted transmissions. I am sorry I don't remember the details.

For those of you that keep tabs on converging technology and the players therein you should of recently noticed the AT&T merger with McCaw Cellular (wireless phone service). That merger has the Baby Bells upset and is AT&T's announcement its betting on microwave telecom in the immediate future. Its a big market is Asia, which is ready to leap-frog the wire and cable (?) route to spread communications, video, and computing.

Next time Wire and Wireless.



If you are not a member of CATS, this is the only issue you will receive.

At: New Carrollton Public Library

The next meeting of CATS will be held on: October 9, 1993
12:00 M Hardware workshop
2:00 PM General meeting



CATS Newsletter
P.O. Box 11017
Takoma Park, MD 20913

FIRST CLASS MAIL

THE CAPITAL AREA TIMEX/SINCLAIR USERS GROUP is a not-for-profit group serving the interests of those who own, use, or are interested in the Timex/Sinclair family of computers.

Officers:

Chairman	Monthly position
Vice-Chairman	Monthly position
Recording Secretary	Monthly position
Corresponding Secretary	Joe Miller
Treasurer	Barry Washington
Newsletter Editor	Mark Fisher
	(301) 589-7407
	(301) 588-0579 BBS

Meetings

Monthly meetings are held from 12:00 M to 4:30 PM on the second Saturday of each month at the New Carrollton Library.

Newsletter

User Group memberships cost \$15.00 per year, are good for 12 months and include all privileges (access to software libraries, group buys, etc.). A newsletter-only subscription is available for persons living outside the Washington metropolitan area and is \$12.00 per year.

Networks

Timex SIG on Compuserve: Wednesday night 10:00 PM Eastern Standard Time (GO CLUB)

CATS BBS: (301) 588-0579, 8-N-1. 300/1200/2400 baud. Message base and files for members, 24 hours a day, no time limits.